

THE  
JUDGMENT  
OF  
Foreign Divines  
CONCERNING THE  
LITURGY and CEREMONIES  
OF THE  
Church of England.

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LICENSED, Nov. 8. 1689.

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L O N D O N :

Printed, and are to be Sold by *Richard  
Baldwin*, in the *Old-Baily*. 1690.

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A. W. D. N.  
Printed, and are to be sold by  
Isaac, in the Old Bailey.

The Judgment of Foreign Divines touching the Discipline, Liturgy, and Ceremonies of the Church of *England*.

To ELIZABETH the most Serene Protectress of the Christian Religion, and the most Potent Queen of England, France and Ireland, &c.

H. Zanchy wisheth Health.

**I**T was a great Trouble of Mind to us (most Serene and most Christian Queen) to hear, that those flames of Contention concerning certain Vestments, which we thought had been long since extinguish'd, are now rekindled in Your Majesty's Kingdom, as if they had been blown up again from Hell. Especially when we understood this to be the occasion of all this heat, That Your Majesty (being persuaded thereto by some Persons otherwise very considerable, and full of Zeal for retaining Unity in Religion, though not under the conduct of knowledge) is now more than ever resolved, nay, has appointed and enjoyn'd all Bishops and Ministers of Churches to wear those Surplices in their Sacred Ministrations, which the Priests use in the *Roman Church*. And 'tis feared those Flames will encrease and spread more and more, till they have put all the Churches of that Large and Potent Kingdom into a general Combustion, to your Majesty's Eternal dishonour; There being several Bishops, Eminent for Learning and Piety who had rather quit their Office and Station, than (against their Consciences) admit such Garments as are Reliques, or at least marks of Papal Idolatry and Superstition, or pollute themselves therewith, or offend their weak Brethren by their Example. And

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what would this be, but to destroy the whole Body of that Church for these Habits? For that's plainly the Devil's design in sowing this Seed of Dissentions among the Bishops. This was his Aim in the Churches Infancy, when he rais'd that quarrel about *Easter*, and other such Ceremonies betwixt the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches. And therefore 'twas not without reason that *Irenaeus* Bishop of *Lyons*, in a Letter sent from *France* to *Rome*, did so severely chide Pope *Viggor*, who being hurried by a strange kind of blind Zeal, would needs Excommunicate all the Churches of *Asia*, because they kept not *Easter* the same time they did at *Rome*: For this was no better than a Tearing in Pieces the real Unity of the Church, by an unseasonable concern for an Uniformity of Ceremonies in all Churches. As soon therefore as I heard that the Church of Christ in that Kingdom was in so Eminent hazard of Ruine, I immediately resolv'd from a sense of the Duty I owe to the Church of Christ, to Your Sacred Majesty, and to the whole Kingdom, to write inithier, and make the best essay I could (if possible) to obviate so great an evil; several having put me on this Service, who have a true Veneration for Christ, and a sincere Respect for Your Majesty. And I had scarce sooner entertain'd this resolution, than our most Illustrious Prince, by laying His Commands on me, not only Prompted my forward thoughts, but even impos'd on me a necessity of writing. Therefore Your Majesty will the less wonder at this Presumption of mine, when you consider, that 'tis not only of my own accord, and by the advice of others, but at the Commands of my most Illustrious Prince ( Your Majesty's most sincere Friend ) that I now write. And in the first place, I thought it of great moment and use, both to remind Your Majesty what your Duty is in this case, and earnestly to beg you would do it Resolutely by the Assistance of our Lord Jesus. I crave Your Majesty's Favourable construction of these Lines, For they flow from that Ardent Love, which as Christians we bear to the Church; and from that singular and

and extraordinary respect we pay to Your Majesty; as God, who knows all things, is our Witness.

When the Apostle, writing to *Timothy*, commands us to pray for Kings, and all that are in Authority, and makes this to be the end for which they are ordain'd, that under them we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all (i. e. in perfect) godliness and honesty; he does evidently teach us the duty of pious Kings and Princes, viz. That they take effectual care, that in the first place, the true Religion, and Worship of God, if formerly banish'd, may be restor'd; and when restor'd, may be preserv'd entirely pure; all things being rejected that have the least tincture of ungodliness: And then, that integrity and holiness of life may be promoted; all kinds of Debauchery and Immorality being suppress'd: And lastly, That publick Peace, and holy Concord be cherish'd among their Subjects, all occasions of differences being as far as possible taken away. That these are the three principal branches of the duty of Princes, and of every good Magistrate, is not only the Doctrine of the Apostle, but is confirm'd by the unanimous consent of all learned and good Men in their sentiments on that Subject.

And if so, I see not how Your Majesty can with a good Conscience urge on the Consciences of pious Bishops, the use of those Habits, and other things that savour of Popish Superstition, after their having been once discarded; much less enforce 'em by Your Commands to a compliance with 'em. For first, This is inconsistent with the principal part of the duty of Princes. For if the chief care of the Magistrate be to preserve the Worship of God in its entire purity; If every thing must be abandoned that either directly or occasionally tends to the violation of it: If to that end, all things are as far as possible to be reform'd according to the Word of God, and the purity and simplicity of the Primitive and Apostolical Platform; and to add no more, if we must (as the Apostle commands) not only abstain from evil it self, but from all appearance of it too; To what purpose can it be (most Serene and Pious Queen) to

introduce those things into the Church by Your Royal Injunctions, which are inconsistent with the purity of Apostolical Worship, which favour of Popish Superstition; which contribute nothing to the edification of Saints, or publick Order, or any Ornament, unless what looks too like the garb of an Harlot; and to say no more, which can be of no use to the Church, but may be many ways mischievous to it? 'Tis certain, by this Law concerning Habits, the Godly will be offended: the Wicked will laugh in their sleeves, and hope for greater things: The middle sort, who are new Converts to the true Religion, but not well seled, will be endanger'd; and if we may judg of things by human measures, will rather relapse towards their old Superstition, to which we are naturally so prone, than be establish'd in the true Religion. And therefore this Order can no way advance the Interest of Godliness, but may the contrary to a great degree. For though those Garments have no intrinsic impurity to render 'em sinful, yet their former and very late abuse have left some kind of stain upon them. Nor can it be doubted, but they'l make way for grosser Superstitions, the very occasions whereof are to be avoided: Why then should those things be obtruded on the Church, from which no advantage can be expected, but much mischief may? For this were to tempt God, Your most Serene Majesty may remember, 'tis not written for nothing, *He that touches Pitch will be defiled*: nor does the Apostle without reason command us to purge out the old Leaven, because a little Leaven sours the whole Lump. Nor was it imprudent in *Hosea*, to blame those of *Judah* for transplanting the Branch (of Superstition) out of *Israel* into their own Garden (i. e. into the true Church.) We should not in Matters of Religion symbolize with the Papists in any things, but those wherein they do so, with the Apostles. Why are some Kings, though otherwise pious, blam'd in Scripture for not taking away the High-places, built by their Holy Fathers, before the Temple, for the Worship of *Yehovah*? But only because the Temple being built and consecrated, God would wou'd have no footsteps

footsteps of any other Chappel left. Thus the Kingdom  
 of Christ being reveal'd, the use of *Aaronical Ceremonies*  
 and Garments was to cease: And justly did the Apostles,  
 after the Ascension of Christ, take care to abolish them so  
 entirely, that no reliques of them might be left. 'Twas  
 wicked then in the Papists to restore them. Whether it be  
 better then to imitate the godly simplicity of the Apostles,  
 or the ungodly pomp of the Papists, let any one judg. Your  
 Majesty may believe me, that the restoring of those Popish  
 Habits will be of more pernicious consequence, than men  
 of the quickest foresight will at first imagine. Methinks I  
 hear and see the Monks bawling it out in their Pulpits, and  
 confirming their Proselytes by Your Majesty's Example;  
 What (say they) does not the Queen of *England* her self  
 (that most wise and learned Princess) begin to return to  
 the Religion of the Holy *Roman Church*, having restor'd  
 the most holy consecrated Vestments of the Clergy? We  
 hope she will ere long restore also all the Doctrines, and  
 Rites and Sacraments of the Holy *Roman Church*. This  
 (most prudent Princess) will be the Language of the  
 Monks and Jesuits in their Pulpits, who omit no occasion  
 of confirming their own Superstitions. To bring back  
 these rotten Vestments, and other Rubbish of Popery in-  
 to the Church of Christ, what is it else, but to give the  
 fairest occasion possible to the Papists to strengthen them-  
 selves, and their Proselytes in their Superstition, and even  
 give them our best assistance to that purpose? Let's hear  
 what the Prophet saith to *Jehosaphat*, King of *Judah*; when  
 aiding *Abah*, *Wilt thou help the wicked, and love those that*  
*bate the Lord?* For this cause shall the Lord be angry with  
 thee. What is this but to recal the unsettled from their en-  
 deavours after the purity of Religion, and secretly prompt  
 them to look back, and return to *Egypt*? 'Tis easie for  
 such to-relapse into ungodliness, since the propensity of  
 Nature gives Superstition so great advantage. The oc-  
 casions therefore of such Relapses should be taken away,  
 instead of being offer'd to 'em. What was the meaning  
 of it, when God forbade the *Jews* to plow with an Ox  
 and

and an Ass; to sow the same Field with different Seeds, and to wear a Linsey-woolsey Garment? 'Tis an odious and accursed thing in the sight of God, to have his own Field cultivated by wicked as well as godly Bishops; to have Popish Doctrine preach'd with that of his Gospel, in the same Church; to have his Church wear a parti-colour'd garb of Popish inter-woven with Apostolical Sacraments, Rites, and Ceremonies. What Agreement has Darkness with Light? We should therefore detest such shameful and impure Mixtures. What is not of God, but comes from those that have polluted the Worship of God, should be intirely rejected, which the Lord himself enjoyns us, when he commanded that all that belong'd to them, who seduc'd the People to strange gods, should be utterly destroy'd; that their Garments, and all their Furniture should be publickly Burnt, viz. in Detestation of such Deceivers, that they may become a cursed thing to the Lord.— And who knows not, that these Garments belong to the Wardrobe of the *Roman Seducer*? *Neither* (saith he) *shall ought of that cursed thing cleave to thine hand; that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of his anger; as he hath sworn to thy Fathers.* To introduce then this *Trumpery* of Antichrist, into the Church of Christ: what is it, but to enkindle the Wrath of God against us? Sure, if any be a true Friend of Christ, he'd not desire to have the Ornaments of Antichrist in his own House, but much less in the Temple of his Lord, no more than he would bear to see the Ensigns of his Enemy in his own House, or in a more honourable Place. And who are we that dare attempt to rebuild what God would have thrown down, and abolish'd? Now God after the death of Christ would have all *Aaronical* and *Levitical* Garments abolish'd; and will he now in the Light of the Gospel approve all the vain and wicked Ceremonies, all the pomps and deceitful paint of Popery, when he has every where abundantly declar'd that these things contribute nothing to enflame, but much to extinguish real Piety? Nor can I imagine what use those Vestments should be of, unless (to come to the Second

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cond Head) to beautify the Face, and adorn the whole Body of the Reformed Church of *England*; just as if a modest and virtuous young Princess should affect to go abroad in the gaudy dress of a known Strumpet. Sure none would commend her Discretion in doing so. So that were there no other reasons against the imposing such Vestments; yet this were sufficient. That tho they be not in their own nature sinful; yet the *Roman Harlot* has formerly, and does yet abuse them to sinful purposes, even as a Cloak to her Whoredoms; or rather as Ornaments to allure others to 'em. For all the pomp of Papal Ceremonies, are nothing but the Paint, by which that Strumpet entices Men to spiritual Fornication: And can such Paint become the Church of Christ? If the Brazen Serpent, which had the Stamp of Divine Institution, as the Instrument of curing the *Israelites*, was yet remov'd by good King *Hezekiah*, when sinfully abused by the *Israelites*; If that excellent King be highly commended for consuming it to Ashes, and throwing those into the River, that there might be no Relicks of it; how much more should those impure Vestments be cast out of the Church, which the Apostles never used, but the *Roman Harlot* has, even to seduce Men to Idolatry? Nor is it just, that those things which have been us'd to the dishonour of God, when in their own nature things indifferent, should be retain'd to the hazard of good Mens Salvation; much less, such kind of Vestments which are only a device of Satan to delude the Ignorant. Every one knows how laudable it is, for States to forbid by their Laws, the bringing in of Foreign Garbs, which tend to corrupt good manners, and are on that account pernicious to the Commonwealth. How far then is the Counsel given Your Majesty from being commendable, viz. of introducing into the Church, Vestments unknown to the Christian Commonwealth, in the time of the Apostles, and such as retain'd any thing of their Spirit? But if Foreign Garbs be not tolerable in Commonwealths; how much less should Idolatrous and Pagan ones in the Church, where God must be worship'd

in Spirit and Truth, and would have but a few Rites us'd, and those the plainest imaginable? If God in his Law, forbad Women to wear the Garb of Men, and Men to wear that of Women, as being unbecoming and unnatural; why should pious Bishops, who are the Servants of Christ, affect the Ornaments, or rather the Deformities of wicked Priests, the Slaves of Antichrist? Nay, since we are of a different Religion, why should we not rather distinguish our selves from them, by a different Garb in our Worship? God requir'd this of his People of old, That they should be discriminated from the prophane Nations about them, by their very Garb, that they might by that publick Sign, profess they would have nothing to do with them. Why should not we do so too? Are we not the People of God? And is not the Command as reasonable now, as 'twas then? If things be call'd honest, because honourable; what honour can it be to the Church of Christ, to have her Bishops in Preaching, and in the Administration of Sacraments, to go a Mumming in a Popish Vizor; to expose them rather to the Scorn, than procure them the Veneration of the People? What praise can it be to Your Majesty, among the true Churches, and their faithful Members, to bring back such Trifles into your Church? 'Tis no way becoming, to force holy Bishops to wear such Masks, there being nothing of either Credit or Virtue in it. Who would approve Your Majesties Wisdom, should you Command the *English* to lay aside their ancient and decent Garb, to wear a *Turkish* Vest, or Campagn Habit; much less commendable is it, to enjoin pious Bishops to alter the old and decent Habit, (like that of the Apostles) differing from the Common only in Gravity and Modesty, for the ridiculous and execrable Vestments of wicked Priests?

And for what concerns the Third Part of your Royal Office, no Counsel can be more likely than this, to disturb the publick Peace. For all Innovation in Religion does, if for the worse, directly disturb the publick Peace; if for the better, yet it does occasionally set the good and bad

bad by the Ears together. But as in things good in themselves, (such as the Reformation of Churches, according to the Will of God) we must not scruple to disturb that wicked Peace of the World; (for Christ came not by his Gospel to preserve that Peace, but to take it away, and send a Sword) So on the contrary, to disturb the Peace of Churches, by urging things indifferent; and thereby to raise Contests between Good and Bad, or betwixt good Men themselves, is too unjust to admit of any Apology for it; so that *Irenaeus* (as was before suggested) did justly reprove Pope *Vistor* on that account. For in such a Case, Divisions are unavoidable then, which nothing can be more pernicious. The Examples which we meet with every where in Church History do with abundant evidence evince the Truth of this. How many, and how great Troubles were rais'd in the Primitive Church betwixt these, who besides the Gospel, urged also, Circumcision, and the Law, and those that deservedly rejected them? And how great Mischief would this have done the Church of Christ, if the Apostles had not timely prevented it, by meeting at *Jerusalem*, and by examining, and debating that matter by plain Scripture, and solid Reason? If therefore Your Majesty (as you ought) would be, and appear to be Apostolical, imitate the Apostles herein; Neither lay your self this Yoke on the Neck of the Disciples, nor suffer others to do it. If the Bishops disagree about this matter; call a Synod, let the Controversy be decided by the Scripture; and what shall be proved from plain Testimonies of Scripture, and clear Reasons; let that be propos'd and enjoyn'd by your publick Edict, that so the difference may be ended. For it should be Your Majesty's Care, that nothing be chang'd or innovated in Religion, but according to the Word of God. This being the true Method to preserve the Churches Peace, Concord and Unity; the contrary, the effectual means to destroy them. Nor should I omit to add, That by this Innovation, not only the publick Peace of that Kingdom will be disturb'd, but new Quarrels probably occasion'd in other

Churches abroad, to the great hindrance of Godliness, and retarding the progress of the Gospel. For 'tis well known, most of the Churches which have fallen off from the *Roman* Pope, not only use not such Garments, but abominate them. Yet there are some Churches (tho few in respect of the former) which stilly retain these, and some other things of that kind; and this only, because the Reformers of those Churches (otherwise excellent Persons, and most faithful Servants of Christ) durst not at first (as judging it not expedient) take away entirely all that was Popish. But as things are done, every one likes best what is his own, whether it be what himself has invented, or what, tho invented by others, he chuses and retains. But if they have the Examples of others, this does but harden them the more, and make them the more unweariedly Industrious by all possible means to draw over to their own Practice. And what the Consequence of Your Majesty's hearkning to this Advice (given by I know not who) about receiving such Vestments, and other Popish Trash will be, is but too obvious. Your Majesty's Example will prompt a set of busy Men to write and spread throughout all *Germany*, their Books about things indifferent, *viz.* That they must be lawfully complied with, and should the rather, lest by alienating the Affections of the Papists, our Concord with them should be obstructed. As if the Papists, tho we should admit all those things for the sake of Concord, would ever reform the sinful Errors of their Doctrine, or Banish their gross abominable Superstitions and Idolatries out of their Churches. And if such Books be spread, others will be as forward to answer them. So that this Fire in *England*, is like to spread new Flames into *Germany* and *France*, on which the Papists will not fail to throw cold Water. A very great Advantage indeed, by following this advice, to disturb the Peace of all the Churches round about. In short, That excellent saying of a Learned Person has its Truth fully attested by long Experience, That debates about things indifferent are the golden Apple of Contention.

tion. And thus much for the disturbance of the publick peace. But what shall I say concerning the consciences of private Christians? 'Tis evident this Injunction of the Surplice will disquiet 'em. Their complaints about it have already reach'd our ears in *Germany*. And how great a sin, and how displeasing to God it is to disquiet the Consciences of the truly pious, the Scripture acquaints us, partly when it warns us not to grieve the Holy Spirit, and offend our weak Brethren; partly as it threatens severe punishments against those that presume to do so, partly by proposing to us the Example of the Saints, especially of the Apostle *Paul*, who thus speaks of himself; *If meat make my Brother to offend, I will eat no Flesh while the world stands, lest I make my Brother to offend.* By his Example in those words he delivers a general Rule, deriv'd from the Doctrine of Christ, that no indifferent thing should be allow'd, much less urg'd, lest of all enjoyn'd, when the allowing, urging or enjoying it will be a stumbling-block to the Consciences of the truly pious. For Conscience is a most precious thing, most dear to God, and aw'd with a reverence of him. How ill advice is it then to establish the use of such Priestly Habiliments in holy Functions by a Law? For (to be short) if those Vestments must be propos'd, they must be so, either as things indifferent, or things necessary. If under the latter notion, 'tis sinful to make those things necessary which Christ would have left free: If under the former notion, then the Churches should be left to their liberty as to the use of them. Whereas by imposing them, they are made necessary, and the foremention'd guilt is incurr'd. Again, Either God has by *Moses* instituted them, or they are deliver'd by Christ, when incarnate, or ordain'd by the Holy Spirit guiding the Apostles; or they are from Men, and those either good or bad. The Ceremonies and *Levitical* Garments which God instituted by *Moses*, were to be abrogated after the Death of Christ, as appears every-where clearly in the Scriptures, especially in the Epistles of *Paul* to the *Colossians*, and the *Hebrews*; they cannot therefore be restor'd without the transgression

of the Divine Will. They can't be said to be deliver'd by Christ, when there is not one word of any such thing; but on the contrary, he often expressly declares there was to be an end of all the *Mosaical* Ceremonies. The same may be said of the Apostles. It remains, that they may be said to be from Men. If from good Men, They are instituted either for Edification, or for Order, or for Decency. But they tend not to Edification (*i. e.* the advancement of Piety) but rather the overthrow of it, (as was shewn before.) Nor to any good Order, but rather disorder. For thus pious and wicked Bishops are confounded, that should rather have been distinguish'd by their Habits. Nor to adorn the Spouse of Christ (as was evinc't before.) They are not therefore to be admitted. But for those things that are invented by Men destitute of the Spirit of God, we have nothing to do with them. Lastly, The Apostles us'd no such Vestments (there being no Authentick Testimony of any such thing.) But the present Church should, as in Doctrine, so in Ceremonies and Vestments, be conform'd to the Rule of the Apostolical. Whose are these Vestments? By whose Authority are they countenanc'd? of what use or service are they to the Christian World? On the contrary we have shewn, they weaken the Interest of Piety, violate the purity of Divine Worship, gradually bring back Popish Superstition, offend the Godly, confirm the Wicked in their impiety, endanger the Salvation of those that are weak in the Faith, give occasion of great mischief, assist the Monks and Popish Preachers to harden their Proselytes in their Superstitions, provoke the Wrath of God, build up what God would have destroy'd, mar the true beauty of the Church, violate the just Laws against a Foreign Garb, discredit the Church, nay disturb the Peace of other Churches as well as that, raise Contentions among the Bishops, burthen the Consciences, and perplex the minds of pious Men, nay grieve the Holy Spirit in them; and lastly, cast among them the Ball of Contention.

Since these things are so (most Serene Queen) not only I, but all my Collegues, and all pious Men, do most humbly

bly intreat Your Majesty, and by Jesus Christ (whom we are perswaded Your Majesty sincerely loves) beseech you, that you would not embrace the foresaid Counsell, nor give ear to such Counsellors. For these Counsels (most Pious Queen) are neither for the Church's, nor Kingdom's good, nor for Your Majesty's honour, since they neither conduce to the cherishing Piety, nor maintaining the Church's Gravity, nor preserving publick Peace; but rather extremely prejudice these things for which Your Majesty should be most concern'd. Rather let Your Majesty's thoughts be intent upon, and Your Authority and Power employ'd, in providing Bishops that are pious, and well vers'd in the Sacred Scriptures (as by the blessing of God Your Majesty has many) let such be encourag'd, and their Advice follow'd. And see that they faithfully discharge their duty, watch over the Flock, teach sound Doctrine, refuse Heresies, drive away Wolves, retain every one within bounds of their duty, and exhort and quicken all to a life worthy of their Christian Profession. Elders also and Deacons are to be admonish't that they be diligent in their Office, that neither the one by negligence and connivance let loose the reins to Licentiousness and Debauchery, nor the other be so intent on their own Affairs as to neglect the Poor of the Church and omit other things that belong to their Office. For these three sorts of Men are the Sinews of the Church on whom it's welfare or ruin chiefly depends. Besides Your Majesty shou'd endeavour with all Diligence that Universities be well Order'd, good and pious Doctors encourag'd, liberality maintain'd and supported; for these are Mothers and Nurses of Churches in which those Persons are form'd and brought forth, and by which they are Educated and Adorn'd, who are afterwards deservedly call'd to the Care and Government of Churches. And lastly, Your Majesty should take care, that such things as cannot be corrected by the Admonitions and Discipline of the Church, should according to the word of God, be punish'd with the Sword of the Magistrate; such as Adulteries, Blasphemies, and other such capital Crimes.

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That wicked Seducers, debauch'd Villains, and turbulent Persons being restrain'd, others may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godliness and Honesty. This (most Serene Princess) should take up Your Thoughts and Counsels, and employ Your Cares and Study; viz. (in a word) That all may deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live godly, soberly, and righteously in this world. This is the becoming Garb, about which we should be most solicitous, that putting off the old man with his actions, we should put on the new, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Nor are there any other Ornaments becoming Christian Bishops than such as the Apostle weaves for 'em in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus—— *A Bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient; not a brawler, not covetous, one that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; not self-will'd, not soon angry, not given to wine, just, holy, &c.* For the Habits and Ornaments of the Aaronical Priest were but Types of these true Ornaments: Those the Shadows: These the Substance. Let Those then go; and let's retain these. Then only will the Church and her Bishops be truly adorn'd.

I do therefore again most humbly beseech Your Majesty, That laying aside all concern for those External Vestments, you be chiefly solicitous, that the Church may be cloath'd with these Spiritual Ornaments, and these may be kept up. I hope Your Majesty, according to Your Clemency, will pardon my boldness in writing. Our Lord Jesus Christ long preserve Your Majesty safe, as a Blessing to us, and to his whole Church.

Heydelberg Sept. 10.  
A. D. 1571.

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*The Answer of the Ministers of Geneva to certain Brethren of the Church of England, concerning some controversie in the Ecclesiastical Policy.*

**B**Eing right earnestly and often required by certain Dear Brethren of *England*, That we should in their miserable Estate give them some kind of Counsel, whereon their Consciences might be staid, the Judgment of many being therein divers: We did long defer the satisfying of their request upon weighty causes. And we assure the Reader, that even now also we most gladly would hold our Peace, were it not a matter of Conscience to reject the suit of the Brethren so often enforced, and with most grievous groanings renewed.

Of which stifned silence of ours, these were the Causes: First, As on the one part we doubt not of the credit of the Brethren, as though they had not sincerely described the state of the Cause unto us; so on the other side it is most hard for to suspect such things, so cleare beside all Office of Bishops, much lesse persuade our selves the same by such personages done.

And further, what men are we that we should determine upon such Causes? Also, if it were lawful for us either by Authority, or else by Consent or Request of either Parties. to give Sentence hereupon, yet were it a matter most wrongful, either Party not heard, or not Present to Determine.

Last of all, Fear mistrusted, lest so great a mischief should by this our Counsel (how simple soever it is) rather become raw then skinned; it being a sore of so desperate a nature, as that it seemeth to be, that Prayers and Patience can only salve the same.

Seeing then that by the sundry requests of the Brethren, we are so hardly persuaded, that of force we ought to  
give

give them some kind of Advice ; We do openly protest, that we so give the same herein, as those that will not in any wise prejudice the other party, much less challenge to us a Justiciar's room over any. And all those men ( into whose hands these do come ) we do in the Lord desire, that they be not herewith offended, but do persuade themselves that these contents are both simple, and faithfully written of us, as upon a questioned cause granted, that the Consciences of the Brethren which desire it, might some way be better appeased, which to set altogether at naught, were a deed wholly void of charity.

Therefore the Cause standing, as we are informed; we profess plainly and in good Faith, that our Judgments over these questions are thus.

*It is demanded, Whether we can approve this disorder in calling of men to the Function of the Ministry, which is, that the multitude of those, which sue for Order, shall be Inrolled in the Ministry, both without the voices of Elders, and also no certain Cure appointed them, but lightly examined of their Lives and Behaviour, to whom also at the pleasure of the Bishop shall liberty be given afterwards to Preach the Word of God for a time prescribed, otherwise to rehearse only the Church Service ?*

We answer, That such Callings of Ministers, whether we answer them by the rule of God's express Word, or else by force of Cannons that are best tryed and allowed, are holden and esteemed of us altogether unlawful, albeit we know that it is better to have half a loaf than no bread. But we beseech God with our whole hearts, that it also will please him to bestow upon the Kingdom of *England* also the same ( that is ) a lawful and ordinary calling of men to the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments. For it being either kept out or hindred, the benefit of the Doctrine of Truth must of force by and by vanish away, or else be held up by some means that is strange, yea, altogether Ghostly and Supernatural.

Furthermore, we do in God's most Holy Name, most Humbly sue to the Princesses Sovereign Majesty, that with

with the whole force of her mind, she endeavour the Correction of this point, wherein the whole ground and stay of the Church of *England*, and therefore of the Realm, also doth stand and persist.

And Thirdly, we do with Tears beseech both those high Personages that are of Her Majesty's Honourable Council, and those which have succeeded in the place of the Popish Bishops (undoubtedly through the Special Mercy of the High and Good God) that they out of the self-same place where overthrow and destruction did issue, they should utterly destroy that Tyranny which hath thus cast down headlong the very Christian Church; and we crave of them in the Dreadful Name of God, before whose redoubted Throne of Judgment we all shall be Arrested. That with all consideration and mindfulness of the Years past, and Conscience of their Duty and Charge, they will not slack to vow and betroth their whole diligence, as well in ordering the means that may accomplish this thing, as in persuading the Queen's Majesty thereto, and that they cease nor at all, this thing being unachieved, chiefly seeing God hath bestowed upon them, the Princely Majesty of so singular a Mistress, as from whose hands they cannot but hope for all Princely and excellent things, unless they list in their own case to fail themselves.

But some will ask, How shall we do in this Point, until then? Verily, if the case were ours, we would not receive this Ministry upon these conditions if it were proffered; a great deal less would we sue for it. Notwithstanding, we exhort these men to whom God hath by this way made entrance to the enlarging of the Glory of his Kingdom, that in the fear of God they do courageously abide therein, yet with the condition, that it may be lawful for them Holily and Religiously to exercise all their whole Ministry. And therefore may also propound, and urge those things in their Cures which do always appertain to the advancement of the better estate therein. For otherwise, if they be forced off this Liberty, and so willed to wink at manifest abuses, that they should also approve these things which

doubtless ought to be redressed: What thing else can we persuade them, than that they should retire from this, to their private Life, rather than without Conscience to nourish that mischief which doth of force draw with it the whole wasting and decay of all the Congregation? Yet we hope that the Queen's Highness, and so many honourable and good men will in such sort plant their diligence, that rather priviledge of Liberty may be granted to the Consciences of so many Godly and Learned Brethren, than that these Horrible Evils should follow: To wit, That the Pastors of the Flock should be constrained either against the Soundness of their Consciences to do that which is evil (and so to be chained in other mens Sins, or else to resign their Ministry, for that third necessity that will ensue this, which is, that against the Princes and Bishops wills, they should exercise their Office) we do so much the more Tremble at, because of those reasons which of themselves are plain enough, albeit we do not utter them.

It is also desired of us to answer plainly and truly, *Whether we do allow the distinction ordained in the wearing of Copes and Garments, as well for the common use, as for the Ministry.*

We therefore do flatly answer, The cause standing, as we do understand, that those men that are Authors hereof do deserve most Evil of the Church, and shall answer at the dreadful Bar of Christ His Judgment. For although that we think that that Politique order whereby not Citizens alone, but also, the degrees of Functions are marked and noted, is not to be discommended, wholly at all: yet we are of opinion, That not every mark and note is straightway to be used. For put the case that the Ministers were commanded to wear the Pide coat of a fool, or the Garment of a Vice in a play, were it not manifest scorning of the Ministry so to do? And those that use these other Garments and Apparel Commanded, do seem verily to us, to trespass somewhat worse than so; because that the Lord hath not only reared and set up this Priestlike Apparel, as a Toy to be laughed at, even of many of the Papists themselves:

selves: But it is also certain, that the same is polluted and defiled with infinite Superstition. But some men will plead the Antiquity thereof; Surely they are Old, and yet the Apostolique simplicity wherein the Church did flourish, is a great deal more Ancient than this. Also, if it please him to wade yet further to search about these matters, it shall be easie enough to shew, that these things which after that, did serve for the note and mark of the Ministry, were first usual among the People, and common. And therefore whence cometh it, things being altered after so long a Season, that this foraign and Strange Guise should be retained.

Doth it not come of a Zeal both Evil and Unprofitable? But some men will say, These things for all that, are of the middle sort, and indifferent. We grant indeed that they are such, if you would consider them simple, and in their own Nature, and apart from all Circumstances; but who are they that will so weigh and consider them? For these men that are yet Papists, what purpose soever this Civil Law doth pretend, are surely by this means established deeper in this Superstition, which hath so overgrown them. And these men that began so earnestly to abhor Superstition, that they now did detest Monuments and Reliques thereof; How much are they offended and wounded herein? As for those which are further, and better Learned, what fruit reap they thereof.

And further, is this difference and mark of the Functions, of such Importance, that therefore the Consciences of so many should be Troubled; especially seeing the reason and purpose thereof newly set a broach, is but drawn even from those that are themselves the manifest sworn Enemies to Sound Doctrine? What meaneth it also, that of those also that are Termed to be Ecclesiastically brought up, and are in the Ministry, not the smallest part are said to have their Papistry in their Breasts about with them? Is this the good hour wherein they shall better profit by restoring of this Attire? Or shall they not rather Vaunt their Crests as in hopes to have Popery Restored again? If any

shall object the Circumcising of *Timothy*, and other-like examples: we right earnestly pray him to consider what *Paul* would have said, if any man should have made this Law, That every man that is in the Ministry of the Gospel, shall be constrained to wear the Garments of the Pharisees, or that they in the Apparel of Prophane Priests should Preach the Gospel, and Administer the Sacraments, and not only Circumcise their Children, notwithstanding, that under some Colour of Reason, this Civil Commandment might set forth the same; yea to what end are these things brought in? for howsoever they might at first be tolerated, till that by little and little they might be taken away, yet being once removed out of the Churches, we see not with what Commodity they can be restored to their Possession again. Therefore we do again Repeat that we before said, That we cannot allow this device, nor yet hope for any good to ensue thereof. Notwithstanding, we will gladly give over this opinion, if we shall learn better Reason therefore. What then? (will the Brethren say on whom these things are so thrown) judge you what we ought to do herein? We Answer, that there needeth in this Answer a distinction; For the case of the Ministers, and the case of the People are not all one herein; Furthermore, many things may, yea, and ought to be Born and Tolerated, which are notwithstanding not justly Commanded. First, therefore we Answer, That albeit these things (as we judge) are not rightly restored to their Possession in the Congregations, yet, seeing that they are not of those kind of things, which are of their own Nature Impious and Ungodly, they seem to us not to be of such weight, that the Shepherds should rather give over their Functions, than receive the Apparel or that the Flock should refuse the publick food of the Soul, rather than to receive the same from the Shepherds that are Apparell'd herein: only, that as well the Shepherds, as their Flocks, may not Sin against their Consciences (so that the Purity of Doctrine it self remain untouched) we do perswade the Ministers, after they have both before the Queen's Highness,

ness, and also before the Bishops, set their Consciences at Liberty by modest Protestation (as doth appertain to such Christians as seek not Sedition and Tumule), and yet grave according to the importance of the Cause, that they do indeed openly in their Parish, still beat upon those things that may serve to the utter taking away of the stumbling Block. And that as God shall give occasion, they will wholly give themselves both wisely and meekly to correct all those Abuses, but yet to bear those things, which they cannot streightway change, rather then forsaking their Congregation, they should give occasion to Satan, that seeking nothing else, to stir up greater and more perilous Mischiefs than these. As for the People (the Doctrine remaining unhurt) we do exhort them, that for all these things they will diligently hear the same, to use the Sacraments religiously, and so long to Groan to God with earnest amendment of Life, until they obtain of him, that which doth appertain to the full Redress and Amendment of the Church.

But again, if that Ministers be commanded not only to tolerate these things, but also that they shall with their Subscriptions allow them as lawful, or else by their stillness Foster them; what can we else persuade them to do, but that having witnessed their Innocency, and in the fear of the Lord tried all means, they should give over their Functions to open wrong. But our hearts betide us of England much better things than these extremities.

It is demanded of us, *What we do judge of the trolling and discanning of the Psalms, Crossing of those Babes that shall be Baptized, and of the demands in Baptism; also of the round unleavened Wafer-cake, and Kneeling in the Lords Supper.*

We answer, That kind of Singing seemeth to be the Corruption of the pure Ancient Church-Service, and Glorifying of God therein. As for Crossing of Babes, whatsoever Practice there hath been thereof in the time of old, yet it is most certain, that it is truly in these days through so late greenness of the Superstition, so most abominable,

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as that we judg those Men to have done assuredly well that have once driven this Rite out of the Congregation, whereof also we see not what the profit is. And we doubt not, but the demands in Baptism have crept into the Church upon this occasion, Because that through the negligence of the Bishops, the same Form of Baptizing of Children was retained, which at the first rearing of the Primitive Church, was to be used at the Baptizing of those that being of years, did enter the Profession of Christ. This thing also we may perceive by many the like yet in use, in the Popish Baptism. Wherefore, even as the Cream and Charm used in Baptism, are by God's Law abolished, altho they were Ancient; so with we also these Demandings, being not only vain but foolish, should be also passed over; albeit that St. *Augustine* himself doth seem in an Epistle of his to sustain it by certain devised Construtions.

The Bread, whether it ought to be made with Leaven, or without, we think it not greatly to be striven for, altho we judg it more fit and consonant with Christ's Institution to have the Bread at the Communion, which is used at the common table; for why did the Lord use unleavened bread? Because that in that hour wherein he thought good to institute his holy Supper, not one man in all *Jewry* used any other. Therefore it becometh us to restore the *Jewish* feast of unleavened bread, or else must it be granted, that 'tis better to use the common and accustomed Bread of all Tables, according to the Example of Christ, notwithstanding that the Bread that he then took was unleavened: For of the Practice of the Primitive Church, which the *Greek* Church doth yet in this behalf retain, we over-pass to write of.

Furthermore, Kneeling at the very Receipt of the Sacrament, hath in it a shew of Godly and Christian Reverence, and might therefore in times past, be used with profit; yet for all that, because out of this Fountain, the detestable use of Bread-worship did follow; and doth yet in these days stick in many minds; it seemeth to us, that  
it

it was justly abolished out from the Congregation. Therefore we do beseech the most Good and Great God, that it would please him to instruct both the Queen's Majesties Highness, and also the Bishops, with such device, as shall be most needful for the perfect doing out of these Impositions, and that at once. In the mean time, because these things, also are not such, as are in their own nature Idolatrous, we do judg that they ought so to be dealt with, as we have advised in the things going next before.

It is demanded of us, *Whether we allow that Baptism, which is administred by Midwives?*

We answer, That not only we disallow the Baptism, as the rest of the things before spoken of; but that we do judg it also intolerable. For it is a thing that hath risen, as well of Ignorance of the very use of Baptism, as the publick Ministry of the Church. We judg therefore, that the Ministers are bound sharply to rebuke this Abuse; muchless, ought they to hold this false Baptism for good and firm. The Reason why, the Learned on our side, have often declared. And we are also ready, when it shall be needful to declare.

It is also reported unto us, *That the Keys of Binding and Loosing, are practiced in certain Courts of the Bishops, neither by the Sentences and Judgments of Elders, which Office that Church hath not yet received, nor according to the Word of God: But the Authority of certain Lawyers, and other like, which is more, often times by the Authority of some one Man, and that also, for such kind of Actions, as are pure Money-matters, even as the misuse of the same was in Popery.*

Wherefore, we answer, That it seemeth to us almost incredible, that any such Customs and Examples (being most perverse) should be used in that Kingdom, whereas Purity and Soundness of Doctrine is. For the right of Excommunication, and binding of the Offender, shall be found never to have been before the time of the Papists, in power and hand of one sole Person, but did appertain

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to all the whole Eldership; from which also, the People themselves were not rashly shut out. Because this also, the Lawyers-like hearing of Suits that appertain to Livings, did fall to the Bishops charge altogether through Abuse. For that place wherein the Apostle talketh of days-men, Umpires at *Corinth*, is to no purpose, whereas the Magistratē is a Christian; nor did the Apostle ever think to butthen the Eldership, with the bearing of such meer civil Causes. And it is most certain, that the Bishops of the older Age of the Church, have had the determining of such Controversies, not for any Authority that they had therein, but through the importunity of Suiters, and that as Housholders, Umpires, and Days-men also; notwithstanding among those Men where this were shewed unto, those did most wisely govern themselves, which chose rather to follow the Example of Christ our Saviour, who refused to be the Umpire in dividing of the Patrimony, or else judg in matter of Adultry, when both the same were preferred unto him.

Therefore, if in *England* any thing be done contrary to this, surely we ought to think, that by such Sentences and Judgments, there is not any Man before God, any more bound, than by the Popish Excommunications. And we wish that this Torment-house of Consciences, and loathsome Prophanation of the Ecclesiastical, and meer Spiritual Jurisdiction, might by the Authority of the Queens Majesty, out of hand be abolished, no otherwise than the marring of the very Doctrine it self. And that Eldership and Deacons may be restored, and set up according to the Word of God, and Canons of the pure Church; which thing, if it be not done, verily we are sore afraid, that this only thing will be the beginning of many Calamities, which we would God would turn away from us. For it is most certain, that the Son of God will one day from Heaven roughly revenge these manifest Abuses, where with the Consciences of our Brethren are troubled, except speedy Redress be had therein.

In the mean while, the things which are not well done by the one Party, may be well enough tolerated (as we think) by

by those Men, which bear the thing which they cannot change. Yet thus far, as that they allow not the thing it self for good, but do only redeem their unjust Disquieting by Patience. But if so be that they shall be forced, not only to tolerate this Faction, but also to approve this Excommunication as lawful, and be constrained to ask unlawful Absolution, to assent to this manifest Abuse; we then exhort them, that they will rather suffer any kind of Trouble, than to do herein against their Consciences. But to what end is all this? For verily, we do promise our selves much better things than these, yea, of all things the best, even at this pinch; especially of that Realm, in which the restoring of Christian Religion hath been sealed and confirmed with the Blood of so many excellent Martyrs also. Only we fear this, lest that which hath befallen so many Countries, should happen to *England*, to wit, lest because the due fruits of Repentance are not brought forth, the Angry God should double our Darkness, the Light of his Gospel being first taken from us. Of this Contents, are our daily Preachings in our Congregation; and verily we think the same ought to be done of all Ministers of God's Word, especially in these our days. That they chiefly set forwards this Principle of the Gospel, which doth appertain to earnest amendment of Life. For this point atchieved, undoubtedly the Lord shall give both Counsel and Zeal, and all things else, which do necessarily appertain to the accomplishment of the Reparation of the Church, already begun. And beforeall, we do require, and with Tears we humbly crave, that our good and right Worshipful in the Lord, the Brethren of the *English* Churches, all bitterness of mind set apart, which we surely fear, after what sort it hath on either side forced this Evil, would patiently bear and suffer each other, so long as purity of Christian Doctrine it self, and soundness of Conscience doth remain. Willingly to obey the Queens Majesty, who is full of Compassion, and all other Prelates. And finally that with all concord minds in the Lord, if they manly set against Satan, who seeketh all occasion of Tumult and infinite Calamities; yea, altho they have not like Judgment

of all sorts of Prelates at the first. For this our writing, God is our Witness, doth not tend to this purpose, that either part should use it against other, as that we should lend it to you as an Apple of Contention: Alho we have concerning these matters, declared our Judgments, even simply, as upon a supposed Case, (God is our Witness) being overcome with the continual Suit of our Brethren. And we joyn our daily Prayers to the Groanings of all the Godly on that side the Seas, that it may please the most merciful God, having Compassion on Mans Frailty, to direct the Queen's Highness, and all the Nobles of the Realm of England. Also every Prelate; and finally, each Workman of this Spiritual Building, with his holy Spirit most effectuously, so as the Work of the Lord so often begun, and so often staled, may happily be set forward, to the great Quietness and Concord of all Men, not only the old Stains in the Doctrine it self, and Ecclesiastical Discipline also, being at length utterly done out, but also all Superstition whatsoever, which Satan newly seeketh to bring into the Church again, driven away. Which vouchsafe to bring to pass through his holy Spirit, the most kind Father in Jesus Christ, his very Son Eternal and Consubstantial with him, in which Persons, we profess one God, and not divers, ought to be Worshipped for ever. Amen.

At Geneva, the  
24. Octob. 1562.

Your Brethren in Christ, to all your  
Godliness most assured,

Theodorus Beza, &c.

Jo. Gualtherus.

G. Favergius.

Jo. Pernellus.

Sim. Golerius.

Cor. Barlierdus.

Remundus Calvus.

Jo. Tremblerus.

Cor. P.

Kud. Fagius.

Pet. Carpenterus.

Hen. S.

Nicolas Coladonus.

Johan. Pinaldus.

Egid. Gauscus.

Urb. Calvus.

Franc. Perus.

Abden. Duplex.

A Copy of the Letter sent to the Bishops and Pastors of England, who hath renounced the Roman-Antichrist, and profess the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

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*The Superintendent Ministers, and Commissioners of Charges within the Realm of Scotland: To their Brethren the Bishops and Pastors of England, who hath renounced the Roman-Antichrist, and do profess with them the Lord Jesus in sincerity, desire the perpetual increase of the Holy Spirit.*

**B**Y Word and Writ, it is come to our knowledge (Reverend Pastors) that divers of our dearest Brethren, amongst whom are some of the best Learned within that Realm, are deprived from Ecclesiastical Function, and forbidden to Preach; and so by you, that they are hindered to promote the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, because their consciences will not suffer to take upon them (at the commandment of the Authority) such Garments as Idolaters in time of blindness have used in their Idolatry, which brute cannot be but most dolorous to our hearts, mindful of that Sentence of the Apostle, saying, *If ye bite and devour one another, take heed lest ye be consumed one of another.* We purpose not at this present to enter into the ground of that question which we hear of, either part to be agitate with greater vehemency than well liketh us: to wit, Whether that such Apparel is to be counted amongst things that are simple indifferent or not? But in the bowels of the Lord Jesus we crave that Christian Charity may

so prevail in you, we say, the Pastors and Leaders of the flock within that Realm.

That ye do not to others that which you would not others should do to you. Ye cannot be ignorant how tender a thing the Conscience of Man is. All that have knowledg are not a-like persuaded, your Consciences reclaims not at wearing of such Garments, but many Thousands both godly and learned, are otherwise persuaded, whose Consciences are continually stricken with these Sentences, What hath Christ Jesus to do with *Belial*? what fellowship is there betwixt darkness and light? If Surplice, Corner-cap, and Tippet have been badges of Idolaters in the very act of their Idolatry, what hath the Preachers of Christian liberty, and the open rebuker of all Superstition to do with the dregs of the *Romish-Beast*? Our Brethren that of Conscience refuse that unprofitable Apparel, do neither damn yours, or molest you that use such Ceremonies: If you shall do the like to them, we doubt not but therein ye shall please God, and comfort the hearts of many which are wounded with extremity, which is used against those godly, and our beloved brethren. Colour of Rhetorick, or manly persuasion will we use none, but charitably we desire you to call that sentence of pity to mind: *Feed the flock of God which is committed to your charge, caring for them, not by constraints, but willingly; not as tho ye were Lords over God's heritage, but that ye may be examples to the flock.* And further also, we desire you to meditate that sentence of the Apostle, saying, *Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Grecians, nor to the Church of God.* In what condition of time ye and we both travel in the promoting of Christ's Kingdom, we suppose you not to be ignorant. And therefore we are more bold to exhort you to walk more circumspectly, than that for such varieties, the godly should be troubled. For all things that may seem lawful, edifie not. If the commandment of Authority urge the conscience of yours and our brethren more than they can bear; we unfeignedly crave of you, that ye remember that ye are called the light of the world and the earth.

All

All civil authority hath not the light of God always shining before their eyes in the Statutes and Commandments, but their affections oft-time favour too much of the earth, and of worldly wisdom.

And therefore we think that ye should boldly oppone your selves to all power that will or dare extol it self, not only against God, but also against all such as do burthen the consciences of the faithful farther than God hath burthened them by his own word. But herein we confess our offence, in that we have entred farther in reasoning, than we purposed and promised at the beginning. And therefore we shortly return to our former humble supplication, which is, that our Brethren, who among you refuse the Romish Rags, may find of you the Prelates such Favours, as our Head and Master Commands every one of his Members to shew one to another, while we look to receive of your Gentleness, not only for that ye fear to offend God's Majesty, in Troubling of your Brethren for such Ceremonies; But also, because ye will not refuse the humble requests of us your brethren, and fellow Preachers of Christ Jesus, in whom, albeit there appear no great worldly pomp, yet we suppose yon will not so far despise us, but that ye will esteem us to be of the number of those that fight against that *Roman* Antichrist, and travel that the Kingdom of Christ Jesus universally may be maintained and advanced. The days are evil. Iniquity abounds. Christian charity (alas) is waxen cold. And therefore we ought the more diligently to watch. For the hour is uncertain when the Lord Jesus shall appear, before whom we your brethren, and ye may give an account of our Administration.

And thus in conclusion, we once again crave favours to our brethren; which granted, ye in the Lord shall command us in things of double more importance. The Lord Jesus rule your hearts in his true fear to the end, and give unto you and unto us victory over that conjured enemy of all true Religion; to wit, over that *Roman* Antichrist, whose wounded head Satan by all means labours to cure again; but to destruction shall he, and his maintainers go,  
by

by the power of the Lord Jesus: To whose mighty Power and Protection we heartily commit you.

Subscribed by the hands of Superintendents, one part of Ministers, and scribed in our general Assemblies and fourth Session thereof, at *Edinburgh, Decemb. 28. 1566.*

*Your loving Brethren and fellow  
Preachers in Christ Jesus.*

*Jo. Craig.*

*Da. Lyndesay.*

*Guil. Gislifomus.*

*Jo. Sportiswood.*

*Jo. Row.*

*Rob. Pont.*

*Jo. Wiram.*

*Jaco. Mailvil.*

*Jo. Erskin.*

*Nic. Spital.*

Thus have you heard in these two Letters, the Judgements of those excellent Churches of the *French* and *Scottish* touching the things in Controversie. Now if to these I should add all other which are of the same Judgment and of their Opinion, the number of Churches would be so many, that the Adversaries would evidently see and perceive what small cause they have to charge us thus with singularity, as though we were post alone, and none to be of our Opinion. And it may here also be noted, that the most Ancient Fathers of this our own Country, as *Mr. Coverdale*, *Dr. Turner*, *Mr. Whitehead*, and many others, some Dead, some yet living, from whose mouths and pens the urgers of these received first the light of the Gospel, could never be brought to yield or consent unto such things as are now forced with so great extremity.

The

The Answer and Judgment of that famous and Excellent Learned man, Master *John Calvin* the late Pastor of *Geneva*, touching the Book of *England*, after that he had perused the same. Faithfully Translated out of Latin, by *Mr. Whittingham*.

To the Godly and Learned men, *Mr. John Knox*, and *Mr. Wil. Whittingham*, his Faithful Brethren at *Frankford*, &c.

**T**His thing truly grieveth me very much, and it is a great shame that Contention should arise among Brethren Banished and driven out of their Countrey for one Faith, and for that cause which only ought to have holden you bound together, as it were with an holy Band in this your Dispersion. For what might you do better in this dolorous and miserable Plague, than (being pulled violently from your Countrey) to procure your selves a Church, which should receive and nourish you (being joyned together in Minds and Language) in her Motherly lap? But now for some men to strive as touching the Form of Prayer, and for Ceremonies as though ye were at Rest and Prosperity, and to suffer that to be an Impediment that ye cannot there joyn into one Body of the Church (as I think) it is too much out of Season.

Yet Notwithstanding, I allow their Constancy which strive for a just Cause, being forced against their wills unto Contention. I do worthily condemn frowardness, which doth hinder and stay the Holy carefulness of Reforming the Church.

And as I beave my self Gentle and Tractable in mean things as External Ceremonies, so do I not always Judge it Profitable to give place to the Foolish stoutness, which will forsake nothing of their own wonted custom. In the Liturgy of *England*, I see that there were many Intolerable mistakes; by these words I mean, that there was not the purity which was to be desired. These vices, tho they could not at the first day be amended, yet seeing there was not manifest impiety, they were for a season to be tolerated.

Therefore,

Therefore, it was lawful to begin of such rudiments or Abbedaries, but so, that it behoved the learned, grave and godly Ministers of Christ to enterprise farther, and so set forth something more filed from rust, and purer. If godly Religion had flourished till this day in *England*, there ought to have been a thing better corrected, and many things clean taken away. Now, when these principles be overthrowed, a Church must be set up in another place, where ye may freely make an Order again, which shall be apparent to be most Commodious to the Use and Edification of the Church. I cannot tell what they mean, which so greatly delight in the leavings of Popish dregs. They Love the things whereunto they are accustomed. First of all, this is a thing both Trifling and Childish. Furthermore, this new Order far differeth from a Change.

Therefore, As I would not have you firece over them whose Infirmitie will not suffer to ascend an higher step: So would I advertise other, that they please not themselves too much in their opinions. Also, that by their frowardness, they do not let the course of their Holy Building. Last of all, lest that foolish Vain-glory steal them away. For what cause have they to contend, except it be for that they are ashamed to give place to better things? But I speak in vain to them which perchance esteeme me not so well, as they will vouchsafe to admit the counsel that cometh from such an Author. If they fear the Evil Rumour in *England*, as tho<sup>t</sup> they had fallen from that Religion, which was the Cause of their Banishment, they are far deceived, for this True and Sincere Religion will rather compel them that there remain Faithfully to consider into what deepe gulf they have fallen; For their downfall shall more grievously wound them, when they perceive you are going forward beyond mid course, from the which they are turned. Fare ye well dearly beloved Brethren, and Faithful Servants of Christ, the Lord Defend and Govern you.

From Geneva 22.

Jan. 1555.

Yours John Calvin.

F I N I S.

